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Programme planning documents for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistics subprogramme

Statistical Programme for 2014

Prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe statistical programme for 2014. It is closely linked to the Biennial Programme of Work 2014-2015 (ECE/CES/2013/15), approved by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2013. The two documents describe the work plan in a different format and are required for different purposes.

The Statistical Programme for 2014 was approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at its October 2013 meeting.

The preliminary list of meetings planned to be held from 2014 onwards is annexed to this document. The list of meetings and workshops held in 2013 is provided in document ECE/CES/2014/15.

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I. Background

1. The annual statistical programme for 2014 is closely linked to the biennial programme of work 2014-2015, approved by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2013 (document ECE/CES/2013/15). Furthermore, it takes into account the outcome of the UNECE review by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM).

2. The UNECE review acknowledged that "the UNECE Statistics subprogramme, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and its related subsidiary bodies work within current mandates in an efficient way, producing concrete results (methodological principles, recommendations, guidelines and databases) in a regular and ongoing way that have clear value added for the region and beyond, and that attract extra-budgetary funding including from outside the region."

3. The review also concluded that "the subprogramme should continue implementing existing mandates under the overall guidance of CES and EXCOM, and continue the good cooperation with partner organizations such as Eurostat, the CIS Statistical Committee, OECD, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)." EXCOM requested that particular attention be given to the work on measuring sustainable development, and that the subprogramme continue its capacity-building activities from extra-budgetary resources which are of particular benefit to the countries in the ECE region.

4. The Statistical Programme is compiled annually. It complements the UNECE biennial programme of work by providing a short description of each activity, according to the following structure:

(a) What the activity is about;

(b) Why the activity is needed, which issues or problems it addresses;

(c) Where the mandate comes from: link to a United Nations initiative, CES, CES Bureau decision or other;

(d) The main actions in 2014;

(e) The expected results and impact of these actions.

5. The CES Bureau approved the UNECE statistical programme 2014 in October 2013 subject to the suggestions made in the discussion that have been reflected in this document.

II. Introduction

6. According to the Strategic Framework for 2014-2015, UNECE works with member countries "to improve the quality of official statistics at the national and international levels, and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the UNECE region". The work is carried out in close cooperation with countries and international organizations, including countries outside the UNECE region. The aim is to improve national statistical information needed for policy making, and for assessing progress made against international development goals.

7. Work is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)[1] to ensure that it focuses on priorities of member countries. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the Conference, also undertaking substantive work mandated by the Conference and its Bureau. The main objective of CES is to improve national official statistics and their international comparability, promote close coordination of international statistical activities, respond to any emerging needs for international statistical cooperation, and develop and adopt statistical standards in the UNECE region[2]. Furthermore, the work responds to the guidance provided by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) and global initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).

8. The work follows and promotes the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, a standard that was developed by the CES, adopted by UNECE in 1992[3], and globally by UNSC in 1994. In July 2013, ECOSOC endorsed the Fundamental Principles confirming them at a high policy level, and recommended them further to the General Assembly for endorsement.

9. CES addresses current priorities of member countries in a flexible and coordinated way. Flexibility is ensured by using teams of specialists created for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, output and time frame. The work leads to outputs such as statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations, which often have a global impact.

10. The following subject areas were identified as a strategic focus of work by the CES Bureau and the UNECE review: sustainable development; globalization; population issues including poverty and inequality, and the use of censuses and registers; modernisation of statistical production; and capacity building in areas highlighted by global assessments of statistical systems.

11. The work is carried out in four main areas: (1) coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region; (2) methodological work to develop and promote the implementation of statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations; (3) capacity building; and (4) the UNECE statistical database.

III. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region

12. Coordination of international statistical work in the region is a key task of the CES with the aim to avoid duplication of work, find synergies, use resources efficiently and reduce burden on national statistical offices. Furthermore, international cooperation, enshrined in the Fundamental Principles of official statistics, is an important factor contributing to the improvement of official statistics in all countries.

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[1] The CES is composed of the Heads of the national statistical organizations in the UNECE region and includes in addition Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and South Africa. The major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region also participate in the work, such as the statistical office of the European Commission (Eurostat), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS-STAT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, etc.

[2] ECE/CES/2007/8 'Rules and Procedures governing the work of the CES, its Bureau and teams of specialists'.

13. The Conference and its Bureau provide several mechanisms to ensure the coordination in practice: the regular meetings of the Conference and its Bureau, the CES seminars exploring foundational issues of official statistics and emerging topics, in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, and the Database of International Statistical Activities.

14. The topics for the CES seminars are selected by the member countries and address issues of current interest. In 2014, the first seminar will discuss what is the value of official statistics and how do we communicate this value. Official statistics are just one of many sources of information competing for the attention of users. This seminar will focus on understanding the value of official statistics compared to data from other sources, and on communication strategies to highlight the importance and role of official statistics in society.

15. The second seminar of the Conference in 2014 will deal with challenges related to migration statistics. The critical need to improve data on migration has been emphasised in the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly. The data quality and accessibility should be improved to provide evidence-based information for policy decisions and public debate. Statistics need to capture the increasing migration flows and their changing patterns as well as the impact of migration.

16. The CES Bureau will meet twice in 2014 to steer the CES programme of work. The Bureau will review in depth three areas of international statistical work. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities, identify gaps or duplication of work and address emerging issues. The first topic to be reviewed in-depth, measurement of social protection, is important especially in the current conditions of budget restrictions. The question that governments are asking today is "How can we save the maximum with minimum impact on our well-being?". Social protection is a cross-cutting issue linked to different areas of statistics, and the statistical definitions of terms such as social security and social protection need to be clarified.

17. The second topic to be reviewed in-depth is leading, composite and sentiment indicators and official statistics. The topic was selected for a review in reaction to different indicator sets being established as a response to policy initiatives in a wide variety of areas. The question is how the statistical offices should react to this challenge. The third topic to be reviewed in 2014 will be selected in January 2014.

18. Some of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Bureau earlier will lead to follow-up work in 2014. For example, as a result of an in-depth review in November 2012, the CES Bureau launched a Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics to improve the availability, accessibility and comparability of statistical data in this area.

19. UNECE maintains an annually updated Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA). The database is a compendium of the annual statistical programmes of international organizations in the UNECE region. The 2014 issue will be available online to be used by countries and international organizations to foster cooperation and avoid duplication of work.

IV. Methodological work in various statistical areas

20. The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations. The work responds to countries' demand to improve the efficiency, quality and comparability of official statistics and is undertaken at the request of the Conference and its Bureau.

21. Flexibility of work is ensured by using teams of specialists (steering groups, task forces). The groups are set up by the CES or its Bureau for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, membership, output, timeframe (2-3 years) and a sunset clause. The work results in publicly available methodological and practical guidelines, collections of leading practices in statistics and training materials. To ensure high quality and relevance, the outputs are consulted with all CES members before being approved by the Conference.

22. UNECE maintains virtual mechanisms for communication to facilitate exchanges of ideas between national and international statistical organizations. These mechanisms typically take the form of wikis, discussion forums and web conferences, bringing together specialists in collaborative environments and accelerating progress in many areas of official statistics, while reducing the need for physical Task Force meetings and the associated travel costs.

23. Five task forces finalised their work in 2013: Measuring Sustainable Development, Time Use Surveys, Gender-based Violence, Improving Migration and Migrant Data Using Household Surveys and Other Sources, and Indicators of Gender Equality. In 2013, the Conference and Bureau set up a Steering Group on Human Resources Management and Training and three new task forces: on Measuring Human Capital, on Circular Migration and on Ageing-related Statistics.

A. Economic statistics

24. UNECE is working with countries to further develop and promote implementation of international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics, particularly in the areas of national accounts, globalization, price statistics, business registers and short-term statistics.

25. UNECE promotes the implementation of the global standard: 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) which provides a comprehensive framework for producing economic accounts adapted to policy needs and the changing global economy. This work is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The work is undertaken under the coordination of the regional advisory body, the Steering Group on National Accounts, and in consultation with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts which coordinates globally the implementation of the standard. The biennial meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts in May 2014, convened jointly with Eurostat and OECD will discuss the necessary revisions resulting from the 2008 SNA implementation, measurement of financial services, expanded accounts for the household sector and the impact of globalization. In 2014, UNECE will continue to support the implementation of 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia by providing methodological guidance and training workshops. A special session for transition economies in conjunction with the Group of Experts on National Accounts will address their challenges and progress in the 2008 SNA implementation.

26. Globalization, in terms of growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services, has a significant impact on the economy and poses challenges to the compilers of statistics in all countries. The CES Bureau set up a Task Force at the end of 2011 to work on the conceptual and measurement challenges posed by global production. The Task Force will address the unresolved conceptual issues arising from 2008 SNA and the Balance of Payments Manual revision 6 in relation to global production and develop further guidance on implementation aspects. The Task Force will prepare a draft Guide on Global Production for endorsement at the CES in 2014.

27. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners promotes the implementation of international standards and recommendations on Consumer Price Indices (CPI). The biennial meeting of the Expert Group on CPI, organised jointly with ILO, will take place in May 2014 in Geneva to discuss new developments, such as sampling techniques and the use of scanner data, price indices for services and quality assurance. The meeting will also discuss the revision of the existing CPI Manual (2004) to reflect technical and methodological developments over the last decade. UNECE is a member of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics which coordinates international work on price statistics and undertakes the revision of the CPI Manual. UNECE will continue its work on short-term economic statistics, such as dissemination of industrial production statistics and supporting application of seasonal adjustment in national statistical offices.

28. UNECE supports the development of statistical business registers, which are indispensable for efficient data collection and for the production of business statistics. At the request of countries, the CES Bureau in November 2011 set up a Task Force to develop international guidelines on statistical business registers. In 2014, the Task Force will work to finalise the guidelines for endorsement by the CES in 2015. The Guidelines will focus on the use of business registers to integrate economic statistics and improve the efficiency of the statistical production process. The Guidelines will, therefore, also address issues raised by the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services (HLG).

B. Social and demographic statistics

29. In recent years, the need to measure people's well-being and social environment has increased. It is further accentuated by the growing implications of ageing population on all spheres of society. The discussions during the review of the UNECE statistical activities noted that work on measuring well-being, poverty and social inclusion should be considered of high priority. UNECE activities in social and demographic statistics aim at improving statistics related to the areas of high policy relevance. The work in 2014 will focus on population and housing censuses, and on the measurement of population ageing, migration, time use, poverty and human capital.

30. UNECE is preparing recommendations with a focus on modernising population and housing censuses through increasing use of registers and other solutions that improve their efficiency. Population and housing censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on the population and the housing stock which is used to produce other statistics, and for planning public infrastructure and services. There are increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy which challenge the conduct of traditional censuses in many countries. Therefore, there is room for further work on innovative methods of census taking, making use of registers and other sources. To ensure consistency with the census recommendations at global and regional levels, the work is coordinated with UNSD, the United Nations Population Fund and Eurostat. In 2014, UNECE will coordinate the work of the nine CES Task Forces charged with preparing the *Conference of European Statisticians Census Recommendations* for the 2020 census round to be finalised by the first half of 2015.

31. In migration statistics, UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration data in the member countries, in response to the strong demand for more and better data on migration. The 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the United Nations General Assembly asked for strengthening efforts to improve the measurement of international migration. A Task Force will finalise guidelines on the production of statistics on socio-economic conditions

of migrants for endorsement by the CES in 2014. In 2014, UNECE will hold the biennial work session on migration statistics to exchange experience throughout the region and to advise on current and future methodological work. UNECE will pursue new work on the measurement of circular migration to agree on the international statistical definition of this phenomenon and harmonisation of its measurement. The CES Bureau launched the Task Force in February 2013 to respond to the call for better definitions and data on circular migration by the Global Forum on Migration and Development. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data among countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, UNECE will continue to improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics.

32. UNECE work on gender statistics includes sharing knowledge and experience at biennial work sessions, developing guidelines and indicators, collecting and disseminating data and building capacity in member countries. Many major policy documents, including the Beijing Platform of Action and the Millennium Declaration, emphasise the importance of gender equality and call for improving its measurement. In 2013-2015, UNECE is carrying out a project on gender statistics together with two other UN regional commissions to strengthen the capacities of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to monitor, measure and analyse progress in achieving gender equality. The work will be based on the set of indicators of gender equality finalised by a CES Task Force in 2013. In 2014, the project includes: a sub-regional workshop; national stakeholder consultations to formulate national action plans and a pilot national data collection to address selected data gaps using the manual on *Developing gender statistics* by UNECE and the World Bank; multimedia training tools; and the survey module on violence against women. In March 2014, UNECE will also hold the biennial work session on gender statistics focusing on the measurement of gender equality and to discuss methodological issues that need to be tackled at the international level.

33. UNECE has been developing guidelines for time-use surveys which provide indispensable data on the quality of life and well-being and shed light on unpaid work, living conditions and gender equality. Time-use statistics have a particularly important role in current international efforts to enhance the measurement of progress beyond GDP. In 2013, a CES Task Force produced guidelines for harmonisation of time-use surveys. The Guidelines highlight several areas requiring further methodological work, such as the use of light time-use surveys, modern technologies and the measurement of subjective well-being. The CES Bureau will decide in October 2013 on the follow-up work.

34. The CES Bureau launched in February 2013 activities to improve and harmonise ageing-related statistics. Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. These statistics are, therefore, in high demand by policymakers. However, they remain dispersed and have gaps and inconsistencies. The 2012 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing and the 2013 International Conference on Population and Development reinforced the call for improved statistics on ageing. In 2014, the Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics, composed of statisticians, policymakers and academics, will pursue work towards developing recommendations on ageing-related statistics and a dashboard of indicators for regular data production based on existing data collection mechanisms. The Task Force aims to submit a final report for endorsement at the CES in 2015.

35. UNECE has been leading work on measuring quality of employment jointly with Eurostat and ILO to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. In February 2012, the CES Bureau established a Task Force on Measuring Quality of Employment to follow up on the work of a previous Task Force which developed the *Potential indicators for measurement of quality of employment* which the CES endorsed in 2010. The purpose of the Task Force is to review the conceptual structure of measuring quality of employment; revise the set of

indicators; and develop operational definitions and guidelines. The work is based on the underlying concepts and structure of indicators defined by a report on *Potential indicators for measurement of quality of employment.* The Group of Experts on Measuring Quality of Employment discussed the first draft report of the Task Force in September 2013. The Task Force plans to submit a final report for endorsement at the CES in 2015.

36. In June 2013, UNECE and OECD launched new work on the measurement of human capital. Statistics on the stock of human capital are needed to understand drivers of economic growth, the functioning of the labour market and to assess the long-term sustainability of a country's development path. Furthermore, information on the human capital distribution among population sub-groups is crucial for understanding inequality, social inclusion and quality of life. A new Task Force will work on the issues raised in the stock-taking report prepared as a follow-up to the CES seminar on measuring human capital in June 2011. In 2014, the Task Force will work on developing guidelines and compiling good practices to help countries construct experimental satellite accounts for human capital. The work programme spans over the period 2013-2016.

37. The monitoring of Millennium Development Goals and the recent discussions on the post-2015 development agenda have underlined the importance of measuring poverty, inequality and vulnerability. Countries and international organizations need comparable data and harmonized data sets, but no coherent set of indicators to measure poverty exists. These issues will be addressed in the seminar 'The way forward in poverty measurement' to be held in December 2013. In 2014, pending the approval of the CES Bureau and in line with the seminar outcome, UNECE will coordinate methodological work towards a set of poverty indicators for countries in the UNECE region. This work would feed into the global discussion on monitoring the post-2015 development agenda.

C. Sustainable development, environment and climate change statistics, and Millennium Development Goals

38. Issues of sustainable development are high on the policy agenda following Rio+20 and its outcome document "The future we want". The Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda called for regional commissions, including UNECE, to coordinate reporting of the sustainable development agenda at the regional level. As a result of the UNECE review, the EXCOM asked the Statistical Programme to give particular attention to the measurement of sustainable development. In 2013, a high-level panel on sustainable development governance, organised within the biennial UNECE session, highlighted the importance of taking into account measurement aspects when setting up the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and called for a regular mechanism for monitoring the achievement of the goals with the involvement of regional commissions.

39. For a number of years, UNECE, Eurostat and OECD have been working towards better measurement of sustainable development. In June 2013, the CES endorsed *Recommendations on measuring sustainable development,* prepared by a Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force. The recommendations are a timely input to the process of establishing the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. When endorsing the Recommendations, the Conference called for a number of follow-up activities, including a pilot testing of the Recommendations. In October 2013, the Bureau will decide on the next steps to support implementation of these recommendations and to pursue further conceptual work.

40. A Joint Task Force of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES is striving to improve the production and quality of environmental statistics in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe. Close attention to

environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics for environmental monitoring. The work is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA). It contributes to the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument-shared Environment Information System (ENPI-SEIS). In 2014, the joint Task Force will continue to review methodologies and produce time series of selected environmental indicators from the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The Task Force plans to publish the updated *UNECE Guidelines*. In 2014, UNECE will also promote the implementation of the newly adopted standard, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in the region, in collaboration with existing working groups and UNSD, and evaluate data availability and capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data.

41. UNECE has undertaken capacity building through a United Nations Development Account project for the East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries in 2012-2013 to support the implementation of international recommendations and good practices in measuring environmental sustainability. A desk study and training workshops, were carried out in 2013 in coordination with the UNSD, EEA and Eurostat. In 2014, an external project evaluation will be carried out.

42. A Task Force, set up by the CES Bureau in November 2011, is drafting recommendations to national statistical offices for improving climate change related statistics, and enhancing their support to the compilation of greenhouse gas inventories. The Rio+20 Summit in 2012 emphasized climate change as an immediate and urgent global priority. The existing environmental, social and economic data of statistical offices should be made more useful for informing climate policies, for analysing climate change and its impacts, and for calculating greenhouse gas emissions. The Task Force is planning to finalise its report for endorsement by the CES in 2014.

43. UNECE supports countries in measuring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The work is conducted in close collaboration with the other regional commissions and UNSD. In 2014, driven by demand and depending on available funds, UNECE will organise a sub-regional workshop and advisory missions on the monitoring and final reporting on MDGs and their post-2015 follow-up.

44. The MDG database will continue to be used to disseminate new national and international data and as a valuable tool to identify and to resolve data discrepancies. UNECE will adapt the tool to the new post-2015 goals and the database is also expected to be useful in the context of SDGs. The database is also used for the UNECE Report on Achieving the MDGs in Europe and Central Asia and for Regional inter-agency reports. UNECE is contributing to the process of setting up the post-2015 development goals through various channels such as the Working Group on Lessons Learned of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on MDG indicators and the UN Task Team Working Group on Monitoring Indicators.

D. Modernisation of statistical production

45. The CES High-level Group (HLG) for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services oversees and coordinates internationally the on-going strategic change in statistical production. The Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda talks about a "New Data Revolution" noting that the statistical community needs to make use of the latest innovations in information technology at both global and national levels. The Report calls for a data revolution that would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision making and ensure increased support for statistical systems.

46. The HLG coordinates the activities of relevant expert groups in the UNECE region to ensure that they are working towards common goals. This coordination is based on a vision for modernising official statistics, endorsed by the CES in June 2011, and a strategy to implement that vision, endorsed by the CES in June 2012. The modernisation work has attracted substantial extra-budgetary contributions, including from outside the UNECE region, which indicates the added value of this work for the region and beyond in ensuring the relevance and efficiency of official statistics.

47. To strengthen the work and encourage wider collaboration, a new governance structure for the work under the HLG will be put in place in 2014. Subject to the approval of the CES Bureau, the work will be driven by an Executive Board and four Modernisation Committees that replace the currently existing teams of specialists. The work of the Committees will be based on key priorities identified by chief statisticians and existing expert groups at the end of each year. In 2014, the topics to be considered include the impact of "Big Data" on official statistics, the legal and intellectual property frameworks for enhanced collaboration, and the practical implementation of the Common Statistical Production Architecture, which is due to be released at the end of 2013.

48. The Modernisation Committee on Production and Methods will work, among other issues, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of statistical data editing. Data editing is often a very resource-intensive activity for national statistical offices. It concerns the core of statistical production: validation and correction of incoming data, and methods to deal with missing data and new data sources. The work builds on the series of guidelines produced within the UNECE work sessions on this topic. In April 2014, the work session on statistical data editing will focus on sharing information about new ideas and best practices, and identify areas for further international collaboration.

49. In June 2013, the Conference noted that providing access to microdata is a key challenge for statistical offices, and asked the HLG to promote sharing of innovative solutions in the area. The increasing demand for microdata and new phenomena such as Big Data require the development of new solutions for ensuring statistical data confidentiality. Subject to the approval of the CES Bureau in October 2013, follow-up activities identified during the CES seminar on access to microdata will be undertaken during 2014 by the Modernisation Committee on Products and Sources.

50. A Steering Group on statistical dissemination and communication will organise an expert meeting in summer 2014 to mark the completion of the four-part *Making Data Meaningful* series and to consider emerging challenges in the area. It will review the need for guidelines for the use of social media for disseminating statistical products, and the communication implications of modernising statistical production and services.

51. The Modernisation Committee on Standards will accelerate the development and enhance the documentation of key statistical standards and frameworks. For example, the Common Metadata Framework is a living reference tool, published in electronic format, so that it can be continuously updated to reflect new ideas and technologies. It has led to the development of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), important tools for standardisation and benchmarking statistical production, which have rapidly become global standards, and have been adopted by the major partners of UNECE.

52. In 2014, the Modernisation Committee on Organizational Framework and Evaluation will evaluate the overall HLG activities and consider issues related to human resources, training, legal topics and licensing. In February 2013, the CES Bureau established a Steering Group to oversee and coordinate activities in human resources management and training. The Steering Group will liaise with the Modernisation

Committee and organise a workshop in September 2014 to discuss the role of human resources management and training in future work on modernising statistical production.

V. Capacity building

53. UNECE aims to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to implement international standards and guidelines. Particular attention is paid to promoting the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems. According to the Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda "too often development efforts have been hampered by a lack of the most basic data about the social and economic circumstances in which people live". This was also enshrined by the Rio+20 Conference that called for strengthening the institutional framework for monitoring sustainable development by means of capacity building in all its dimensions – social, economic and environm ntal. The UNECE review further reinforced capacity building from extra-budgetary resources as one of the priority areas of UNECE statistical work.

54. The UNECE capacity building activities include:

(a) Global assessments of national statistical systems;

(b) Training workshops;

(c) Advisory services by the UNECE experts to address country specific needs.

55. The capacity building activities are carried out in coordination and in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), PARIS21, the World Bank, IMF, and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

56. The UNECE capacity building activities are based on the findings and recommendations of global assessments (GA) of national statistical systems of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. GAs are carried out together with Eurostat and EFTA, and are used by various donors active in the region, such as the World Bank. The purpose is to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. This helps the national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and the international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. GAs recently conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine are expected to result in action plans to improve national statistics according to the recommendations. In 2014, the partner organizations (EFTA, Eurostat and UNECE) will organise an event to discuss with countries how to support, monitor and coordinate the implementation of the recommendations provided in the GAs. The scope and modalities of regular "rotating schemes" for global assessments will be agreed upon.

57. Based on the findings of global assessments and the needs of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in 2014, UNECE will organise sub-regional workshops and advisory services to address current challenges in economic, social and environment statistics, modernising statistical production and improving the indicators for monitoring the achievement of MDGs. The capacity building will be supported by promoting the exchange of national good practices at sub-regional level, undertaking benchmark studies and stimulating the establishment of networks of experts.

58. The Programme Working Group on Statistics of the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)[4] meets annually to discuss needs for capacity building and coordinate donor activities. The UNECE will work in 2014 on the development and fund-raising of three capacity building programmes: on economic statistics, including the implementation of the 2008 SNA; regional migration statistics; and the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) with a special focus on the water and energy accounts (in cooperation with UNESCAP). These projects would complement the on-going capacity building activities in the region.

VI. UNECE statistical database

59. UNECE provides a statistical database offering a wide range of information on member countries via free on-line English and Russian interfaces. This work promotes open access to, and use of, data for evidence-based decision making, as requested in the Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The report also calls for data disaggregated by gender, geography, income, disability, and other categories.

60. Particular emphasis is, therefore, placed on providing data on areas of high political importance to governments and to the United Nations system, such as progress towards the MDGs (under a mandate from the 2005 UNECE reform), and issues relating to migration, globalisation and gender equality. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues, and helps identify priorities for methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries.

61. The database provides the source data for the popular *UNECE Countries in Figures* publication, as well as regular short articles on the economic and social development of the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2014.

62. The UNECE statistical database is also used to disseminate data for UNECE policy work. It currently includes statistics on economy, gender issues, population, education, employment, public life and decision making, work-life balance, health, crime and violence, science, transport by modes, forestry, forest resources and protection as well as biological diversity. Disaggregated data on all eight MDG goals are provided, as well as a Clearing House on Migration Statistics to improve data consistency at the regional level. In 2014, the database on MDG indicators will be developed similarly as a tool for addressing data discrepancies. Preparatory work to identify suitable data on energy and environment issues will also be undertaken in 2014. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

[4] SPECA members: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Annex 1.

List of meetings from January 2014 to May 2015

No.	*Meeting (venue)*	*Date*	*Capacity Building*
1	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	28-29 January 2014	
2	Workshop on Gender Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	17-18 March 2014	
3	Work Session on Gender Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	19-21 March 2014	
4	Workshop on Big Data (Rome, Italy)	2-3 April 2014	
5	62nd plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Paris, France)	9-11 April 2014	
6	Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (Dublin, Ireland)	14-16 April 2014	
7	Work Session on Statistical Data Editing (Paris, France)	28-30 April 2014	
8	Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	6-9 May 2014	
9	Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	13-15 May 2014	X
10	Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices held jointly with ILO (Geneva, Switzerland)	26-28 May 2014	
11	Task Force on Measuring Human Capital (Geneva)	May 2014	
12	Work Session on the Communication of Statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-20 June 2014	
13	9th SPECA Project Working Group on Statistics (Baku, Azerbaijan)	25-27 June 2014	X
14	Meeting on Human Resources Management and Training in Statistical Offices (venue tbc)	26-28 August 2014	
15	Workshop on Migration Statistics (Chi inău)	8-9 September 2014	X
16	Work Session on Migration Statistics (Chi inău)	10-12 September 2014	
17	Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics (Geneva)	September 2014	
18	Group of experts on population and housing censuses held jointly with Eurostat (Geneva, Switzerland)	22-25 September 2014	
19	Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	26 September 2014	X
20	Statistical Modernization(Geneva, Switzerland)	13-14 October 2014	
21	Seminar on Poverty Measurement (Geneva)	15-16 October 2014	
22	Workshop on Poverty Measurement (Geneva)	17 October 2014	X
23	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	21-22 October 2014	
24	Task teams on MDG indicators held jointly with UNSD (Geneva, Switzerland)	October 2014 (tbc)	
25	IAEG meeting on MDG indicators held jointly with UNSD (Geneva, Switzerland)	October 2014 (tbc)	
26	Workshop on the modernisation of statistical production	19-21 November 2014	

	and services (Geneva, Switzerland)		
27	Group of experts on measuring quality of employment (venue tbc)	November 2014 (tbc)	
28	CES Bureau meeting (venue tbc)	February 2015 (tbc)	
29	Meeting on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	6-8 May 2015 (tbc)	
30	Statistical Modernisation (venue tbc)	April 2015 (tbc)	
31	Meeting on the management of statistical information systems (Geneva, Switzerland)	April 2015 (tbc)	
32	Workshop on Gender Statistics (venue tbc)	April 2015 (tbc)	X
33	9th Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators held jointly with ENV (Geneva, Switzerland)	May 2015 (tbc)	X
34	Expert Meeting on Migration Statistics (venue tbc)	May 2015 (tbc)	
35	Statistical Modernisation (venue tbc)	May 2015 (tbc)	
36	Work Session on statistical metadata (Geneva, Switzerland)	May 2015 (tbc)	
37	63rd plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, Switzerland)	June 2015 (tbc)	
38	Group of experts on Business Registers (Luxembourg)	September 2015 (tbc)	
39	Group of experts on measuring quality of employment (Geneva, Switzerland)	September 2015 (tbc)	
40	Seminar on data collection (Geneva, Switzerland)	September 2015 (tbc)	
41	Meetings on Population and Housing Censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	September 2015 (tbc)	
42	Work session on statistical data confidentiality (Geneva, Switzerland)	October 2015 (tbc)	